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# THE CASE

Of the Late

*JAMES KEIL,*

Dr. of Physick,

Represented by

*JOHN RUSHWORTH*

OF

Northampton,

SURGEON.

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Imprimatur,

*ROB. SHIPPEN,*

Vice-Canc. Oxon.

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THE  
CASE  
OF

Dr. *JAMES KEIL*,

Represented by

*JOHN RUSHWORTH.*



Should not have been induced to make these Papers Publick, barely on account of the rash Censures, that are frequently Cast upon the Practice of *Surgery*, not attended with Success; tho' that Consideration alone, in the Case of a Person of such Value and Eminency in *Physick*, as Dr. *KEIL* is known to have been, may be thought sufficient to have mov'd me to it: But being certainly inform'd, That several *Physicians* and *Surgeons* have before,

fore, and since his Death, given themselves the Liberty to reflect, not only upon me for Using, but also upon the Deceas'd for Submitting to the Methods that were taken with him; I think I shall not discharge my Duty, either to my Friend, or to my Self, or indeed to the Profession, if I do not, as far as I am able, endeavour to set what was done in a True Light.

In order thereunto, it may be requisite to look back to the Time He first mentioned any Disorder in his Mouth to me, which was in *August* 1716. He then told me, He had perceiv'd a Fulness in his Mouth for very many Years; but in the last Three or Four Years it was much Encreas'd, and by the Bulk began to be Troublesome to him, tho' not in the least Painful: Upon examining it, I found the Tumor not only large, but also to fluctuate, and therefore told him, until I was satisfy'd what was contain'd in it, I could not come to a Resolution, as to the manner of treating it; but, if he pleas'd, I would make an Incision into it, and then would tell him what I thought was fit to be done; He was very well satisfy'd, and resolv'd I should proceed accordingly.

Upon Opening it, there appear'd to be nothing contain'd in it, but Blood; not in the least alter'd in Colour, Consistence, or Smell, from what is contain'd in the Vessels. The Tumor presently sunk very much, and I dilated the Incision with my Probe-Scissers, and press'd in some *Dossels*; and then told him, it was a fleshy Tumor, call'd a *Sarcoma*, and that the Blood contain'd in it was only accidental; and that the best way of extirpating it was by the actual  
*Cautery*;



*Cautery*; but I let him know, that I feared it would be more Troublesome to him, and take longer Time to Cure, than he seem'd to expect.

We presently sent for the best *Instrument-Maker* the Country afforded, and gave him Directions: But that Night, talking with him of his Case, I desired him to consider, Whether it might not be thought a Slight, by the Learned of both Professions, if I should Perform the Operation, upon a Man of his Character, without a Consultation; there being no Reason (but the Loss of his Time) to be in Haste. At first he seem'd unwilling to lose so much Time, yet upon Consideration, he resolv'd for *London* the next Day, where several *Physicians* and *Surgeons* were Consulted; They all agreed, it was a simple *Sarcoma*, and that the actual *Cautery* was the properest, if not the only means of Curing it. This Account I receiv'd from the Dr. by Letter; as also, that the *Surgeons*, upon Probing, found the Bone bare, and from the ill Smell concluded it was foul: "Which, said the Dr. it was impossible for you to discover; because, after I left *Northampton*, Two *Dossels* of the first Dressing dropt out. I was very glad to hear That, for those *Dossels* lodging so long, in that warm Part, I was in hopes might be the Occasion of the foetid Smell; which the *Surgeons*, not being acquainted with, might fairly be induced to take for that of a foul Bone: Which I mentioned to the Dr. by the first Return of the Post; and also, that I was farther encouraged in that Hope, by considering that the Blood, that was discharged at the first Opening, was not at all alter'd, neither was any Smell per-

perceiv'd, until after the lodging of those *Dossels*.

Whether the Dr. ever mention'd this my Opinion, to the *Surgeons* in Town, I know not; but, when he return'd to me, to have the Operation perform'd, he seem'd discourag'd by the Opinion the *Surgeons* gave of the Bones being foul. But I thought I might make bold to confirm him, in my former Opinion, the ill Smell ceasing without the Assistance of Medicines. The Consequence proved the Assertion: For when, by several Applications of the *Cauteries*, I had removed the whole Tumor, it was plain to me, the Bone was not affected; and the Part healed as Smooth, and with as much Ease, and in as short a Time, as ever I met with any thing of that Nature. And the Dr. continu'd well, without the least Disorder or Complaint, a Year and about Eight Months.

But then in *April* 1718. He shew'd me a small *Ulcer*, near that Part of the Mouth that was before affected, and told me, He perceiv'd it began upon Eating some hot Meat, that stuck to it: At first this Heal'd without much Trouble, but soon Excoriated again; and then I could not again perfectly Skin it: For as soon as it was almost Heal'd, it would begin to Excoriate a-fresh at the Edges, which is what is usual in *Phagedænic* *Ulcers*. And tho' I could digest it, and keep it easie, yet it got ground of me, and spread towards the Teeth; and, near the Root of One of the *Molares*, laid the Bone bare, which appear'd to me at the first not to be Injur'd, but being long exposed became Foul. It not exfoliating in due Time, with the Tincture that is commonly used, I propos'd the Touching  
of



of it with a small *Cautery*, I being able very easily to come at it without making use of a *Cannula*; which, by confining the Heat, very much injures the neighbouring Parts: The good Effect of which Practice, of not making use of a *Cannula*, where you can conveniently omit it, I had good Experience of, in Dr. *KEIL*'s former Case: For tho' he had several *Cannula*'s made in *London*, by the best Hand, yet after Twice using of them, I told the Dr. That if a Patient could be trusted, it would be much more easie to him, and the Surgeon would see much better to use the *Cautery*, than when obstructed by a *Cannula*. The Dr. was Pleas'd with the Thought, and press'd me, at the next making use of the *Cautery*, to do it without the *Cannula*: The Advantage he had by it was, that he bore Four Burnings, and said, It gave him not the Pain, or Trouble he had from but One before, and that the Parts were much less Disorder'd by it afterwards. But to return.

It will not I suppose be doubted, but that proper internal Means were all along made use of: But the *Ulcer* still appearing to me more Threatening, his Friends press'd him, and I more than any, that he would go again to Town, and have the best Advice it could afford, and I resolv'd to Accompany Him, in the Beginning of *August* 1718. And I can't forbear saying I was Surprized; when, upon a Consultation, my Brothers, *Palmer* and *Brown*, made light of it; and, without so much as hearing what I had to say, concluded, That it was chiefly owing to the Bones being Foul; and that by Drawing a Tooth or Two, which they said were affected, and

and by Purging with *Mercurius dulcis*, all would be well; and so they took their Leave. Says the Dr. to me, "What say you to this? I answered him, That I fear'd they would find themselves again Mistaken as to the *Surgery* Part; and that as to the *Mercury*, tho' a good Medicine, He knew he had taken it already several Times, without any considerable Advantage. The Dr. Smiled and said, "But since I came  
 "so far for Advice, I will not only give them a  
 "Tooth, but also try again what Effect *Mercury*  
 "may have.

Another Meeting was order'd, and the Tooth-Drawer to be there: Upon Drawing the Tooth, it appear'd to be very Sound. The First Dose he took of *Mercury*, whether by Cold, or any other Accident, I know not; very much Disorder'd him. I could not conveniently be Absent any longer, and therefore the next Day return'd into the Country, and do not know how many more Doses the Dr. then took; but in a few Days I receiv'd a Letter from him, in which he said, "I know nothing that has suc-  
 "ceeded right with me, since I came here: You  
 "know what State you left me in, and I was  
 "a great deal Worse for some Days afterwards;  
 "tho' I hope the *Mercury* has had no ill Effect,  
 "yet I should have been loath to have been so  
 "Swell'd in those Parts, as I have been, wil-  
 "lingly. The old *Ulcers* are not yet Heal'd,  
 "they tell me indeed, there is no Appearance of  
 "any new Ones, and that the *most effectual* Me-  
 "thods, which have been taken here, will in-  
 "fallibly Prevent every thing, &c.

But



But by his Next, which I soon receiv'd, I had the Melancholy News from him, That the *Ulcer* was broke out again larger than ever, and therefore that He would be down with me in a Day or Two, and he came accordingly, but in a worse State than ever before. And tho' it again Digested, and did as before near Heal, yet the returns were quicker, and upon every new Eruption it was Larger and Worse; and so continu'd to be, notwithstanding all the good internal Methods continually used by the concurring Advice of Dr. *Mead*, Dr. *Friend*, and several other Eminent *Physicians*; which no doubt was owing to the malignant Nature of it.

And therefore in the Beginning of *February* last, I could no longer forbear expressing my Fears to the Dr. that it would terminate in a raging *Cancer*. He was too sensible of it, and told me, "That since I thought I could keep it within Bounds no longer, He was resolved to try what a *Salivation* would do: And tho' I could say nothing as to the Advantage he might expect from it, yet I frankly own'd to him, that if it was my own Case, I should be of his Opinion, that I might make bolder with my-self, than with any other Patient: But desired by all means, he would first hear if his Friends, the *Physicians* and *Surgeons* in *London*, had yet any other Method to propose, or else would approve of that. He wrote to them, the Answer was long in coming, which made the Dr. express Himself to me with more Warmth, than I ever knew him to do before: (For he was a Man of the greatest Command of Himself, as well as of the sweetest Temper) "What, says he, is not  
"their



“ their Silence enough? And will not you, whom  
 “ I take for my Friend (for fear of losing your  
 “ Reputation) Assist me in what I desire? With  
 a great deal more to assure me of his Confidence  
 in me, and of his Opinion of my Ability to take  
 Care of him in the Course. I am not so Vain, as  
 to mention all his kind Expressions, yet if it be  
 desired, by any of his Friends, I will give them  
 the Satisfaction of seeing the Letters I had from  
 him, when he was Absent from me in *London*.

At this Time his Brother, Dr. *John Keil*, came  
 to him from *Oxford*; and, as I understood after-  
 wards, had seen Dr. *Friend* there, who was  
 for having him Salivated at *London*: But the  
 Dr. being determined to the contrary, did not  
 at that Time acquaint me with it, but began his  
 Course, which I desired might be in the mildest  
 Method, by small Doses of *Calomel*, encreas'd  
 gradually, which Method pleased him very  
 well: But Dr. *Friend* (to whom Dr. *John Keil*  
 constantly sent an Account of our Proceedings)  
 gave it as the Opinion of Mr. *Palmer* and Mr.  
*Brown*, that it should be done by *Uction*: I  
 gave my Reasons to the Patient against it, but  
 they still press'd it, notwithstanding the ill Symp-  
 toms, that I thought, at that Time, forbid it;  
 which Symptoms they had been acquainted with.  
 They still persisting, I desired the Dr. would  
 give me leave to write my Opinion myself to  
 Mr. *Brown*, which I did hastily in the following  
 manner.

Good

Good Brother,

**I** Have seen Dr. Friend's Letters to Dr. Keil ; and Dr. Friend, I understand, has been so kind as to Consult you, and several Others in the Case ; whose Judgments, tho' I have all due Regard for, yet in the present Circumstances (tho' I give the Preference to Uñction in some stubborn Cases) I dare not encourage it in This : For my Reason at first, for beginning so mildly, was, that in this uncommon Case, we might, by degrees, make some Judgment of the Effects of Mercury, and then proceed accordingly : For had I not been prevented by the Accidents you have, by Dr. Friend, been acquainted with, I should have been very desirous to have gone at least to the Height mentioned by Dr. Friend. But since I find, by encreasing the Quantity of the Dose to a Scruple (of which He has taken Four) it has not affected the Glands at all, or made him Spit the more ; but his Stomach is much more oppress'd by it, with vast Quantities of Flegm, Viscous to a degree I have not met with, and gives him more than common Disturbance, not to be relieved but by often Vomiting, to which purpose the Turpeth has answered very well for the present : My great Fear is, all things consider'd, that if I should proceed to Uñction, and it should produce the same Effect, that it will be too Many for him. If my Fears are too great, my more than common Concern and Friendship is some Excuse for me ; as also I desire it may be to You, for this tedious Account from, Sir,

Yours, &c.

Febr. 22<sup>d</sup> 1718.

J. RUSHWORTH.

I not



I not receiving, in due Time, an Answer to this, and the Patient being reduced to a great Weakness, and to so great a Disorder, that he could not bear Talking to, I writ these few Lines for him to consider of.

Dear Sir,

**A**S your Case now stands, I must own my self a Coward: Tho' Dr. Friend is much Mistaken to think, I am either unacquainted with, or fear the common Accidents that often arise in Salivating: But that irregular and uncommon Effects are, in extraordinary Cases, produced by Mercury, Hales's Case is to me a sufficient Precedent, of which I have formerly told you the Particulars; and tho' your Friends in Town take no Notice of the unusual Disorder in your Stomach, yet I should think my self Inexcusable if I should not. And if, upon using an Unction, any irregular Ferment should again arise, Weak as you now are, I should dread the Consequence. In these Circumstances, I think it most Prudent for me, to advise you, to let what is already taken, go fairly off, and if you find it not Effectual, you may with much better Prospect, when you have Strength, begin de Novo, by Unction, and have an Opportunity to have it done by the infallible Men.

Upon this the Dr. no longer, at present, pressed me to use the Unction, and in a few Days, the Force of what he had taken being somewhat Spent, he began to get Strength, and the very great Slough (which was one of the Accidents mentioned to Dr. Friend) not only cast off, but also healed, as did also the old malignant Ulcer,



*Ulcer*, and all the Parts of the Mouth looked very Smooth and Well; and the Dr. was very Chearful, and in great Hopes of Gaining the Point.

At this Time, it being Eighteen Days since I wrote to Mr. *Brown*, I receiv'd a Letter from him, in which he mention'd nothing to the Purpose. This, I must confess, did not a little Warm me; and I the same Night wrote to him again, but never receiv'd any Answer: Perhaps he thought mine too Hot; if so, if he desires it, both mine, and his that occasioned it, shall be produced.

The Dr. seeing what had been done to have so good Effect, and hoping what was before advised by Mr. *Palmer* and Mr. *Brown*, would effectually prevent any return of his Disorder, resolv'd to use a *Mercurial Unction*. He had now more Strength, and therefore I comply'd with him; I began with a small Quantity, and encreased it every Time, until I had used even a larger Quantity than had been propos'd by Dr. *Friend*: But it not in the least affected the Glands, or made him to Spit near so much, as when he took the *Calomel*; neither did the *Unction* or *Calomel* produce the Smell, which generally attends *Mercurial* Courses; and to my great Surprize and Concern, whilst he was using the *Unction*, the *Ulcer* Broke out again. And by this we were Discourag'd from Proceeding any farther; and in due Time the Dr. endeavour'd to Purge this off, but he had always so untoward a Constitution, that neither now, nor at any Time before, could he by Purges have any regular Evacuation; which was, no doubt in his Case, very Injurious to him. Now

Now I perfectly Desponded : But a Friend and Kinsman of the Dr's, a *Surgeon* of no small Reputation, assured him, that he had known, when other Methods failed, a *Mercurial Fumigation* had answered : And what is it that a rational Man will not try to prevent the Excruciating Pains of a *Cancer* ? When the Dr. mentioned this to me, I confess'd I knew nothing of that Practice, and always had an ill Opinion of the Fumes of *Mercury* : And he also own'd to me, that he was wholly unacquainted with it ; but satisfied in his Friend, and therefore would try it : He began the Course according to his Friend's Directions ; I never pretended to order any thing afterwards ; but however still frequently Visited my Good Friend, tho' with an akeing Heart. The Fumigation not only made him Spit, whilst he was using it, but also for some Hours afterwards ; and the Patient continued to use it for several Days, but without any good Effect upon the *Ulcer*. In about Ten Days after he had left off the Fumigation, a very hard Tumor began to arise, upon the Muscles of the lower Part of the Face and Neck, and increased very fast, and in a very short Time spread it self from Ear to Ear : and, by the Bulk, in a great measure prevented his Swallowing, and soon Suffocated Him. He was Chearful, and to all outward Appearance tolerably Easy to the Last, and had what he now desired, a gentle Release, *July 16. 1719.*

And thus, to the Misfortune of Mankind, it is manifest to me, that *Mercury* is not adequate to this *Herculean* Dislemper : but however, this Case, and That I mentioned before to the Dr. gives me good Reason to believe, that *Mercurials*



*rials* do at least blunt the Acrimony of the Humour, and so procure Ease. For, tho' that Patient had most acute Pains, before he enter'd into a *Mercurial* Course, yet afterwards he was easie all a long, as he told me; for I was call'd in but a few Days before he died. These, and other Melancholly Cases, should not however, I think, wholly discourage *Surgeons* from making rational Attempts upon a Distemper, which I fear is more frequently met with, than formerly, in this Part of the World: It is to be hoped, there is in Nature a Specifick that may answer; and happy will that Man be who shall discover it. He will deserve to be placed next to the Great *Hippocrates*, and also to be Rewarded, by the Publick, equally with him, that shall find out the *Longitude*.

I will not pretend to determine, how far the Fumigation might contribute to the sudden growth of the Tumor mentioned; but I should be very glad that the *Surgeon*, who recommended it, would be so Ingenuous, as to Vindicate himself, by giving Instances of its Innocency, and of the Advantages he has met with in the Practice of it.

And now I heartily beg Pardon of the Friends of the Deceased, who shall give themselves the Trouble of Reading this Account, that I could not bring it into a narrower Compass.

Having truly related what was done, in the Case of Dr. *Keil*, I hope it may appear, that I have acted an Honest, and not an Unskilful Part in it: If what was prescrib'd by others of greater Fame, when it came to be try'd, had not better Success, I presume I shall no longer be Blam'd for it. No  
Man



Man would willingly lose any Reputation, who is to live by it. I question not, but the best *Surgeons* in the World will allow, there are Cases for which there is no Remedy: And he who frankly owns thus much, no more loses any Reputation, than the Quack, that promises greater Matters than he afterwards performs, gets any: And I think they, who have Censur'd me, would have done more Ingenuously, if they would rather have look'd upon the present Case as Incurable by any *Surgeon*, than have thrown their Aspersions upon me, as not treating it properly.

*FINIS.*





